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Obſervations and Reflections

ON

THE ORIGIN OF

JACOBIN PRINCIPLES, &c.

ADDRESSED
TO THE
BRITISH NATION.

Obſervations and Reflections

ON

THE ORIGIN OF
JACOBIN PRINCIPLES;
The LEADING DISSENTERS POLITICS;
The NECESSITY of the PRESENT WAR;
The CAUSES and EFFECTS of the LATE BANKRUPTCIES;
The CONSTITUTION and COMMERCE of this COUNTRY,

AND ON

A LETTER

ADDRESSED

To the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT,
By JASPER WILSON, Eſq.

BY A SINCERE FRIEND OF HIS COUNTRY.

Ut mare, quod ſua natura tranquillum ſit, ventorum vi agitari atque turbari, ſic et *populum Romanum* ſua ſponte eſſe placatum, hominum ſeditioſorum voces, ut violentiſſimis tempeſtatibus concitari,

CICERO PRO A. CLUENTIO.

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1794.

Burke's answer to J. Wilson's

Obſervations and Reflections

ON

THE ORIGIN OF

JACOBIN PRINCIPLES, &c.

THE preſent circumſtances of Europe are ſo extraordinary, ſo out of the common courſe of human calculation, as to aſtoniſh and alarm the moſt wiſe and prudent; by ſetting afloat the ſelfiſh paſſions and projects of the weak and the wicked.

The French revolution is, doubtleſs, one of the *moſt violent* political convulſions that has ever diſturbed the peace of nations; and from

that

that violence have been produced ſuch enormities as never could have been imagined of a nation ſo far advanced in ſuavity of manners, and in political refinement.

In human affairs it is always more eaſy to perceive or imagine cauſes after events, than to predict or prophecy events from cauſes. This unfortunate circumſtance is very humiliating to the wiſdom of man; but its natural effect ſhould be, to teach him more caution and diffidence of himſelf; and more reſignation to, and reliance on, than ſuperior wiſdom which cannot err.

The moral and political revolutions in France, may be, perhaps, *in ſome meaſure* explained, by what has been falſely and reiteratedly denominated *the progreſs of knowledge.*

Authorſhip for more than theſe fifty years paſt has been a hacknied trade, in which writers of all orders and degrees, retail their wit and wiſdom,

wisdom, through the medium of those great dealers the booksellers, for the laudable purposes of entertaining and instructing mankind. *With a few exceptions, among superior authors, and eminent booksellers*, this traffic of the brain has been carried on, with very little regard to the truth or falsity, the moral or immoral tendency of any production; but merely as it might prove a marketable commodity, in the mental circumstances of the public: or, in more fashionable phrase, according *to the progress of knowledge*.

The progress of real knowledge, *in the moral and political department*, most certainly has not increased materially, if at all, since our Augustan Age in this country; nor even since the Pagan times of antient Greece and Rome. But it must be confessed, that great talents have been long employed with much efficacy, against the poor remains of the Romish superstition, and against tyranny in Europe, with all the force of wit and ridicule; and, in some in-

ſtances, reaſon has exerted herſelf with great clearneſs and ſtrength: but ſhe is never agreeable to the imperfections of our nature, and conſequently receives only a tranſient attention.

The effect was, moſt certainly *for a time*, the melioration of the condition of Europe, by breaking the bonds of ſuperſtition, and by ſoftening the chains of ſlavery: and the moſt intelligent abſolute princes have ſhewn great ſolicitude to confer upon their ſubjects as many political advantages as were conſiſtent with ſuch forms of government.

But in the midſt of this literary ebullition, it ought never to be forgotten by any *Britiſh ſubject*, that the conſtitution and laws of England, the complete liberty and happineſs of our iſland, above that of all other nations upon earth, were the continual theme of all the wits and philoſophers of the continent: and the greateſt credit that any of their performances could acquire, was to be well received in this

country,

country. The very name of Englishman was respectable throughout Europe, and nothing but the extreme of folly, or madness, can ever make it otherwise.

The English Constitution is the result of the deepest reflection of some of the wisest men that ever lived, confirmed by many severe experiments, and defended and maintained by all men of true genius, and by all lovers of justice and humanity. There never existed a constitution so humane and provident, for the distresses and misfortunes of the lowest order of mankind.

The thorough comprehension of these truths may, probably, require a more considerable degree of thought and application than may prove convenient or agreeable to such *intuitive statesmen and philosophers*, as start up, like mushrooms, every day from the fuming hot-beds of distracted reading and confused intelligence.

Such

Such is the ſort of *progreſſive knowledge*, that ſeems to be ſo much inſiſted on and admired *by our modern reformers and revolutioniſts*. Smattering in every thing, knowing nothing ſolidly in politics, is the diſtemper that irritates them; and preſumption and arrogance are the natural conſequences.

Any perſon tolerably well read in the writings of many of the wits and philoſophers for many years paſt, *however entertaining and rational they may appear*, muſt have obſerved a conſtant tendency, by their mode of attacking or ridiculing ſuperſtition, and of expoſing the defects of the European Governments, to produce a contempt for all religion, and a ſceptical diſſatisfaction with almoſt every form of government.

There is a way of laughing at human follies and vices, that will deſtroy a proper ſenſe of their weakneſs or turpitude in ourſelves; and there are ways of reaſoning on the imperfections of human inſtitutions, that will diſpoſe

our

our minds not to ameliorate their defects, and assist their infirmities, with the care and caution of an intelligent practitioner, but to annihilate indiscriminately the sound with the unsound parts.

Quacks in all professions are the same. They are wickedly adventurous and audacious, from their want of just principles to proceed upon; and if they can but imagine the probability of any issue to gratify their avarice, or their vanity, they neither feel or care for the miserable consequences their destructive ignorance must often produce, unless, perchance, they senselessly draw down destruction on their own justly devoted heads.

However these things are only the natural consequences of the modes that have been pursued for the instruction and illumination of mankind. The swarms of crude and indigested productions, which have so long and so rapidly teemed from every press in Europe, have

effected

effected a general disregard of *all established institutions*; and the eternal principles of moral and political rectitude, have been shaken to their foundations, by the most flattering and seducing addresses to the passions and the vanity of mankind. Superstition *seems* to have been destroyed; but sound and rational religion is also destroyed with it. The faults of every constitution and government *seem* to have been discovered and exposed, but without helping us to such rational means of correction as are practicable in existing circumstances, without danger of the greatest violation of justice and humanity. It is natural to vitiated minds to dwell on defects and imperfections; but it is equally natural, that they should, on that account, be as much less capable of perceiving and enjoying the realities which are in their actual possession. Ignorance and wickedness are constantly prone to destructive violence; they need only to be excited and encouraged to produce universal ruin.

Our

Our greateſt danger has ariſen from the want of ſolid knowledge. Speculative writing and publiſhing are become a mere trade; and ordinary reading is the idle amuſement of thoſe who have no rational buſineſs to purſue. Nobody reads for inſtruction, and but few write from a diſintereſted affection for truth. Entertainment is the principle object of readers; and profit has long been the general purſuit of moſt of the literary tribe; and a proſtitution of talents and of truth has been the ſacrifice to every prevailing taſte in ſucceſſion. Hence our *advancement in real knowledge* has not been great; and our principal credit, it might be eaſily ſhewn, depends more upon what has been purloined from our predeceſſors without acknowledgment, than from any diſcoveries of our own. But we have advanced in ſophiſtry to ſuch a degree, as to endanger the ſtability and exiſtence of all our earthly enjoyments.

The proper *freedom* of the preſs muſt always be held moſt ſacred among the real

lovers of ſcience and of truth. But the vicious and unbounded *licentiouſneſs* of the preſs is become a ſort of tyranny, which has nearly placed truth and falſhood, virtue and vice, upon the ſame level of uncertainty; without the poſſibility of enabling indolent readers ever to diſtinguiſh either with any degree of accuracy. This cannot aſſiſt *the progreſs of knowledge*, but is extremely unfavourable to truth; becauſe the weakneſs and errors of men are ſo much more numerous than their eminent qualities, that it affords an *apparently* well-grounded handle to the diſcontented and and malevolent to keep the public mind continually agitated and diſſatisfied. Beſides, the depreciation of eminent abilities and virtues is always ſure to meet with a favourable reception from the worthleſs and the envious.

Nothing has been more productive of diſſolute manners than *the licentiouſneſs* of the preſs, nor more inimical to truth and modeſt merit. Books, like plays and operas, have

fallen

fallen in with the prevailing taſte of the day, however frivolous, impertinent, or abſurd. The moſt perfect dramatic pieces have long been too powerful, or have required too much attention for the trifling, unregulated, and unconnected education of the numerous frequenters of the theatres. Nothing will now go down but an incongruous medley of ſong, tragedy, comedy, and farce. And, perhaps, the theatres may in ſome meaſure be excuſed, if they be conſidered as bound to comply with the *public taſte*, without regard to *its truth*.

But there was a time when they wore a more manly aſpect, and were conſidered as places of *ſolid inſtruction* as well as of entertainment.

The numerous diurnal papers and periodical productions produce a horrid waſte of time, and a ſort of *knowing ignorance* in thoſe who truſt much to their information. They keep up a continual warfare of parties with a wan-

ton licentiouſneſs and partiality radically deſtructive of every principle of truth, honour, and ſincerity. And ſo much has a practice in theſe things been productive of an unfeeling impudence, that any *temporary ſucceſs in falſity and deluſion* has acquired a ſort of currency for cleverneſs and wit among the profligate and unprincipled. How elſe could the moſt abandoned of mankind acquire any degree of popularity?

Thoſe who are at all acquainted with the malcontents of the preſent day, will find ſuch reflections by no means ſevere when applied to them. Their violence, the natural offspring of conceited ignorance and confuſed ideas, would carry them away blindly to their own deſtruction, as well as to the creation of the ſame ſcenes of miſery and atrocity that diſgrace and vilify France, and aſtoniſh and terrify the world; were it not that the Britiſh nation *feel too ſenſibly their ſuperior felicity* not to deſpiſe the

the wicked and abſurd reveries of ſuch unqualified and preſumptuous teachers.

The eternal ridicule of Voltaire, the wild and paradoxical vagaries of J. J. Rouſſeau, and the blunt illiteracy and ill-founded confidence of Thomas Paine, and the labours of his more inſtructed followers, have exhibited their effects in France in colours ſuitable to their monſtrous abſurdity; and their former admirers and fautors *ſeem* to be a *little diffident* of the wiſdom of theſe great apoſtles of political rebellion. Though, perhaps, we ſhould be nearer the truth were we to believe that their diffidence is rather in the wiſdom of their diſciples and executors in France. For they ſtill fancy, and ſay they could do theſe things better in England.

But now, however, they have thought it proper to change their tone a little, and to diſclaim *total* revolutions, and have recurred to the old cant about *temperate and moderate*

reforms;

reforms; which Dr. Prieſtly (it was thought, by the deeply initiated, very imprudently) explained in a pragmatical letter, addreſſed to Mr. Pitt, on the rejection of the repeal of the Corporation and Teſt Act by the Houſe of Commons, in a way ſavouring very little of either temper or moderation. In ſhort, his demands of many other reforms were bold and affirmative; and ſignificant of an undoubted right in all orders of Diſſenters to a partition of power in every department of the Britiſh conſtitution, though many of them are well-known enemies to our limited and judicious monarchy, and to a church that ſeems wonderfully formed to reſtrain and repreſs the dangerous turbulencies of fanatical adventurers in religion.

As to a promiſcuous right of all deſcriptions of men, however incongruous or inimical their religion or their politics may be to what is eſtabliſhed in any country, to an equal right in the executive part of any

government

government that has ever existed in the world; it never has been, nor ever can be admitted, without rendering a nation subject to endless disorders and revolutions.

A firm execution of the *just laws established*, is the only proper means of correcting such petulant and malignant distempers of the brain, and such anarchical invasions of the established constitutions and laws of every form of government that has ever existed, antient or modern.

Perhaps these things, *from very recent experience*, may begin to be in some measure too apparent to be denied, at least by the principal part of the British Nation; which has forced from the malcontents *very dubious professions* of affection for our happy constitution, and even *almost a toleration of the monarchical part of it under certain proper regulations.* Such *professions*, however, are to be considered only as a temporizing caution and prudence, not at all obliga-

tory

tory on a more favourable change of circumſtances.

The good work may go on, perhaps to as much, or more advantage, through the ſides of miniſters, who have long been conſidered as a ſort of butts, to be ſhot at for amuſement; or as political game, on which qualified gentlemen might let off their patriotick wit and wiſdom with ſome caſual advantage to the ſtate: but the raſcally poachers are ſo numerous, and are ſo induſtrious in the dark, with their nets, ſnares, and traps, as to prove very often highly injurious to the ſecurity, peace, and proſperity of the country.

One of this latter ſort, under the name of Jaſper Wilſon, Eſquire, has ſpread a treacherous letter before Mr. Pitt, which is found worthy of much applauſe and grave obſervation by the malcontents. They find in it a palatable mixture of jeſuitical inſincerity, or as Lord Bacon expreſſes it, *left handed wiſdom*, whoſe

whose principal objects are, the fomenting of discontent with the war; to shake all confidence in public and private credit, and (vain effort) to excite a contempt in the nation for *the minister and the government.*

It may not be amiss to make a few observations on the *laudable intentions of so virtuous a patriot*; and on the manner in which he introduces himself to the minister and to the public.

" *This writer (says he of himself) was one of " the warmest of your admirers. The progress " of time and events has cooled his enthusiasm " respecting you, but he has not, as is often " the case, turned it into hostility. Neither " disposed to offend or flatter, he would deli- " ver his sentiments *with the deference due to " your extraordinary talents* but with the ear- " nestness and *solemnity*, suited to the present " crisis of human affairs."

* p. 1.

Time and events have cooled his enthusiasm, but have not rendered him hostile, though this very letter is so hostile as to exceed the bounds of decency and common sense. He preserves *a due deference* for Mr. Pitt's extraordinary talents, but finds his own *so much more extraordinary*, as to feel no diffidence in assuming *a dictatorial superiority*, with an *affected solemnity* not very well suited to our own affairs and very unfavourable to *the sincerity of his professions*.

* He *assumes*, in an *imposing tone* (for he always rides the great horse) that our calamities, in commerce and manufactures, *are great beyond example*, which calamities are so clear as to require no proof, and he believes Mr. Pitt will admit them as *unquestionable facts*. As it is not necessary to *prove*, he therefore *affirms*, that all Europe is in a state of bankruptcy; that Russia, Austria, Poland, France and Spain are either bankrupt, or on the verge of it, and that they have

* p. 2.

have recourſe to *practices*, that differ little from *open rapine*.

His favourite, France, to be ſure, has highly diſtinguiſhed herſelf for *open rapine*; and poor Poland, always divided againſt herſelf, and tending conſtantly to deſtruction, by the vices of her highly ariſtocratical conſtitution, has doubtleſs ſuffered much from ſomething very like it. But the *poſitive knowledge* of Mr. Wilſon with reſpect to *the affairs of all the nations of Europe*, whoſe names in writing down, ſeem to ſwell his imagination, one would think might be doubted a little by any man of but a moderate ſhare of reflection. He would have done well, at leaſt, to have exhibited *ſome ſort of probability* of his extraordinary intelligence, but that does not appear in any part of his letter.

" *If the injury to commerce and manufac-
" tures be more felt in Britain than elſewhere,
" it is becauſe we have had more commerce and

 manu-

* p. 2.

" manufactures to be injured." What a truism! what a jingle of words!

Again, " In one respect England differs, at " this juncture, from most of the other Euro- " pean nations—our public credit is *tolerably* " sound." If that be the case, it differs from *them all* according to his own bankrupt-decision above.

A friend of his country (though his enthusiasm may be cooled towards Mr. Pitt) would have drawn more favourable conclusions from such premises. He might have concluded justly, that amidst all " our calamities beyond example," we were much more favoured than the other nations of Europe; for that our public credit was *perfectly sound*; and that our commercial credit and importance were by no means affected in any proportion to its magnitude. He would have rejoiced in the " unprecedented" but truly patriotic " measures" which were resorted to in parliament to maintain

tain the credit of an immenſe commerce, which had only overſhot itſelf by the facility of obtaining an unlimited, or rather an unregulated credit; and which was, moſt certainly, much more the effect of an extraordinary influx of wealth and proſperity among ourſelves, than occaſioned by any difficulties ariſing from our commercial connexions with other nations: And Mr. Jaſper Wilſon muſt be very ignorant of the cauſes of the late failures in this country, if he attribute them to any thing elſe. Indeed the cenſure of *ignorance* * cannot be eſteemed ſevere, on a man whoſe knowledge ſeems to be ſo confined and ſo confuſed, as to ſpeak of the genius of a few manufacturers (from whom it ſeems probable he has derived all his commercial ideas) as having † "counteracted the expence and folly of the American war." With all due reſpect for the genius and abilities of Meſſrs. Watt, Wedgewood or Arkwright, there

* This ignorance is demonſtrated in an excellent pamphlet intitled "Reflections on the Propriety of an immediate Concluſion of Peace."——*Stockdale.*

† P. 7.

there can be no doubt that their mechanical inventions, and ingenious productions, were effected and carried on, merely for their own emolument, and without the moſt diſtant idea of counteracting the expence of the American war.

All manufacturers, traders, merchants, and huſbandmen, who excell in their various callings and purſuits, muſt undoubtedly increaſe the commerce and add to the wealth of any nation: and that they can exert their abilities with the utmoſt freedom, *and without any unreaſonable reſtraint, with reſpect to the general intereſt*, is the ſtrongeſt evidence imaginable of the liberty and felicity of the country in which they live; and ſuch a country is Great-Britain and her dependencies. But to talk of any ſet of manufacturers, traders, merchants, or farmers, as exerting their abilities, with any other view than to enrich themſelves, and as if they conſidered themſelves as employed for political purpoſes, is an idle abſurdity.

We

We are next, gravely, presented with a sort of dissertation, on what he calls a *War System*, founded on a *Funding System*; and he presumes this idea to be *so new*, that it may not fully have presented itself to the mind of Mr. Pitt.

He must therefore beg leave to unfold this mystery at some length, to shew its application to our present distresses; as if wars founded on public funds were *a novelty*, and as if it were possible for any man of common sense, to be ignorant of the reciprocal effects of war and funding. However, for upwards of twenty pages, follows a train of trite observations on this subject, intermingled with inconclusive applications, and with most malignant and seditious reflections in a highly bombastic style, on our own government, and on most of the rest of Europe.

" *Speculative men, Sir, (says he to Mr.
" Pitt) in the retirement of their closets, have delighted

* p. 3.

"delighted to contemplate *the progress of knowledge*, and to shew its *happy effects* on the condition of our species."

Ah! these speculative men in their closets!

At the bottom of the same paragraph he doubts of its *happy effects* in politics, and says it has been *injurious* in many respects.

* He tells us Lord Bacon has asserted "that knowledge is power," which he does not dispute, but wisely remarks, *that power may be well or ill used.*

Again. "Among savages the means of intercourse are restricted," but as knowledge increases men grow more familiar, which nobody will deny. But he brings the history of the European nations to prove it.

The balance of power is then mentioned, as "*springing up*" in the 15th century, as a cause of wars, as are religious distinctions, "and *the* "*supposed*

* p. 3.

"*supposed dignity of crowns, an expression the* "*more dangerous from the obscurity of its mean-* "*ing.*" Mr. Wilson's mode of expression, to be sure, marks no great respect for the dignity of crowns; but a mind of less inveteracy would have included the nations with the crowns. For though it may be truly said, that many unjust wars have originated from intrigues in the cabinets of courts; it may be found, on impartial examination, that at least as many have arisen from cabals in the senates and councils of republics; and *dignity*, in both cases, must generally signify no more than such ideas, as those who govern, affix to it; whether their ideas be founded on just and true principles or not. There certainly can be no *true dignity* in actions contrary to justice and humanity: yet the national convention, and the executive instruments of the *extreme tyranny* of France, may not blush to talk of *their dignity*; and what is yet more unaccountable, they may find in this happy country, men mad and foolish enough to applaud their hardy pretensions.

A ſhort account follows of *funding*, from Dr. Adam Smith, with obſervations gloomy and hacknied. Mr. Pitt, however, he ſeems ſorry to acknowledge (for he ſays it is *but candid* to acknowledge) acted on a higher ſyſtem, by finding means to diſcharge the *intereſt* of the national debt: but he is not ſo candid as to commend him for his endeavours to diminiſh the *principal*. Then was your day of triumph! cries the *candid* Mr. Jaſper Wilſon, as if it were his only day of triumph; but his minority Jacobinical friends could tell him another ſtory.

" *Half-informed men, (he obſerves) have " ſometimes contended that the national debt " is a national good." But he waves the diſcuſſion by affirming " that this poſition de- " pends on ſophiſms that have often been " detected." Nevertheleſs, he acknowledges that many *good things* attend it, but *the evils predominate*, which always falls in with the ſyſtem of a malcontent.

However,

* p. 6.

However, had he been but tolerably acquainted with, or attentive to Dr. Smith's "Wealth of Nations," he could never have found in that author that *increasing wages*, unquestionable ability to pay the taxes, and such a surplus of riches as is ever ready to be voluntarily subscribed for all real and imaginary necessities of the poor and distressed, or for the service of the public, are signs of poverty, ruin, and desolation.

"*Without *embarrassing* ourselves with *com-* "*plicated ideas*"—he continues to tell us, in laboured phrase, the simplest things imaginable; talks proudly of chemistry, mechanics, and the spirit of liberty, as having made Britain prosperous "*in spite of the wicked politics of her rulers*;" concluding with this fine empassioned apostrophe—"Are we to go "on for ever in this extraordinary career? "It is impossible! The sources through "which we have been enabled to sustain our "burthens,

* p. 6.

"burthens, are in a great measure *dried up*, "our burthens themselves are increasing, *and* "*the whole fabric of our prosperity totters to* "*its base!*"

This, to be sure, may sound well enough in Jacobin ears, yet it must be very natural to plain men, of but common observation, to conclude, that where "*the security of property*, "*and the spirit of liberty*, diffused through a "nation, have called forth the talents of the "people;" where trade of *every sort*, as well as "*chemistry and mechanics*" find the most fostering encuragement, so as to produce the most unexampled success, even "*in spite of* "*the wretched politics of its rulers*;" that such a country must have something in its constitution and laws that excells any thing that ever existed before, and therefore most highly worthy of *the preservation and defence* of every British subject.

As

As to "the wretched politics of its rulers," admitting the arrogrant phrase, the present minister cannot be deemed answerable for *any thing done before his own time*, nor (it is but just to allow) for *every thing done in his own time*; for *no one is absolute in this happy country*; and ministers, fortunately for themselves and the British empire, are legally subjected to the advice and controul of their colleagues in council, who must have their weight in all deliberations, which may sometimes produce actions *not quite consonant* with the opinions of a minister, but with which it might justly be deemed contumacious in him not to comply.

"But such speculative men in their clo-"sets," *as Mr. Wilson appears to be*, are but very incompetent judges of practical business. Elaborate phraseology and indeterminate declamation may prove grateful enough to such troubled minds, and may give spirit to the discontented and malevolent; but they are

ignorant

ignorant of the progressive difficulties attendant upon the accomplishment of the most just and reasonable designs in practice. One would think the example of France might teach them as much, and silence their frothy speculations.

"*Our prosperity depends on commerce; "commerce requires peace, and all the world "is at war.---This (says he) is the short and "the melancholy history of our situation." We may comfortably conclude then that our commerce is ruined, and that our days of prosperity are over. How untoward is this! that all the world should be thus perversely in the wrong, as if it were only to draw down destruction on the head of the poor of England! To confirm this "short and melan-"choly history," we are presented with a most gloomy and malignant picture of the dreadful effects of the late failures in trade; ("from Saint Petersburg to Leghorn!") but they

* p. 7, 8.

they are aggravated in Great Britain (ſays he) "*by our extraordinary proſperity, which produced* "*over-trading and unjuſtifiable ſpeculation.*" In the reſt of Europe, he ſays, they originated not in *the imprudence* of merchants, but were occaſioned by the *war-politics* of the princes; but he has not told us how!

The plain fact is, that proſperity produces commerce, and commerce proſperity, reciprocally. That commerce will be carried on at all times, *in war and in peace*; but generally with the greateſt advantage in peace; yet, in war, many very conſiderable articles of commerce, and to an immenſe amount, come into demand, which are very little wanted in times of peace. In a great mercantile nation *that commands the ſea*, war frequently does very little more than change the employment of its hands from one manufacture to another. This muſt be underſtood with limitations and exceptions; but in the war which terminated in

1763 our trade flourished to a very considerable extent.

It is not a very difficult thing to perceive in the present war, though it must increase our national debt, according to its nature and ~~countenance~~ continuance, that *being masters of the sea*, and the French commerce and rivalry nearly annihilated, and its remains very subject to capture; though we lose their custom for certain articles of manufacture they used to take from us, yet we shall find ourselves most amply indemnified, and that too *for many years to come*, for any loss we may sustain by the war on that account. Our commercial treaty with them was not likely to be of any long duration, if, as has been said, it proved so advantageous to England, and so unfavourable to France. Besides, a nation *so rapidly reducing itself to poverty* by its own destructive violences, must prove not only a much less valuable, but a *very dangerous* customer to the merchant.

Those

Thoſe markets they were accuſtomed to ſupply, muſt be ſupplied now, *principally*, by ourſelves. Their Weſt India iſlands will, very probably, fall into our hands, and the name of *Frenchman* ſcarcely be known in the Eaſt, that immenſe ſource of commerce and wealth to this country. We ſhall, doubtleſs, participate very conſiderably in their Mediterranean and Levant trade, and in their fiſheries; and by a late treaty with Ruſſia, a trade of no inconſiderable expectation has been laid open to Britain through the Dardanelles into the Black Sea. As to all the reſt of the world, *we are at peace*, and allied with nearly all the nations of Europe in the war againſt the French; our commerce therefore with them will receive no interruption, according to the extent of their demands, which muſt increaſe by the annihilation of the French market; and notwithſtanding the miſerable, and, it may juſtly be called, inſolent picture exhibited by Mr. Jaſper Wilſon of the nations in friendſhip and

* p. 8, 9, 10.

alliance with his own country, their commercial demands, varying only the commodities in requeſt, probably will not diminiſh materially, if at all, in value. In ſome articles it will undoubtedly increaſe.

Nothing is more reaſonable, with regard to nations as well as to individuals, than to adviſe them *to mind their own buſineſs*. In trade, it is not the buſineſs of *a free nation* to concern itſelf with other nations, any farther than belongs to the ſecurity of its own affairs with other nations. The quixotical univerſality of the pretenſions of our reformers to interfere in the governments of all the nations upon earth, and to pronounce upon their wiſdom or folly, their happineſs or unhappineſs, unleſs merely as ſpeculative or rational admonitions to ourſelves, is the moſt impertinent and impolitic conduct imaginable. What have we to do with their imperfections, any farther than concerns our own political

ſecurity

ſecurity, and the juſtice of their commercial transactions with our own country?

Is it not enough, that we are bleſſed in the poſſeſſion of *true liberty* ourſelves, and enjoy all the advantages of ſo ſuperior a ſituation, and have ſo long been envied and admired by ſurrounding nations, but that we muſt illiberally traduce and inſult them, and provoke their averſion by the moſt contemptuous expreſſions? Mr. Wilſon, it certainly is not the way to make either converts of them, or to conciliate their friendſhip *in caſe of need*, and *that caſe* is always exiſtent in a great commercial country, which ſhould never, *unneceſſarily*, make nations its enemies.

But, Sir, your *political principles*, if poſſible, ſeem to be leſs founded and more extravagant than your *commercial*; and if your phyſical acquirements* be not under a more rational ſubjection, God preſerve the lives of thoſe who are committed to your diſcretion.

The

* Mr. Wilſon is ſaid to be a phyſician.

The existent circumstances of the *nations* of the earth, under divine wisdom, *and a just commercial practicability with them*, relatively to his own country, is the true and only business of *a wise and virtuous politician.* As to the imperfections and disorders of their various constitutions, they are no farther our concern than as they may prove dangerous to our own peace and safety; but *so far* they are concerns of the most important consequence.

He talks of bankruptcies, as of every thing else, with the treacherous, but we trust, ineffectual view of shaking the commercial confidence and credit of his own country, and of all other nations, which would, no doubt, prove very favourable to Jacobinical revolutions.

Our bankruptcies have been occasioned principally, if not altogether, by our own extraordinary prosperity in commerce, from causes which are well known, and which are therefore easily explained to men who have made

a tole-

a tolerable proficiency in commercial knowledge. The very great number of banks, which have ſtarted up within theſe few years in every part of this kingdom, prove not only the wealth, but the enterpriſing ſpirit of the nation. Men who formerly uſed to deſpiſe trade, have been ſtrongly attracted by the deſire of increaſing their fortunes, without the pains of deſerving it. From ſome great good fortune of our own, or from ſome deficiencies in other nations, our commercial opportunities ſeem to have been, and indeed are, greater than ever were poſſeſſed before by any nation; and there really is nothing exiſting in the world at this time, to prevent their being much more extenſive than ever, eſpecially if the war end ſucceſsfully.

Nothing is better known, even to men in ſmall trades, than the *danger of going on too faſt, of borrowing too much money, and of having too much intereſt to pay.*

Dr.

Doctor Adam Smith* will explain to his readers, why the paper of all banks ſhould be limited to the real demand of the country in which they are eſtabliſhed; why ſpeculation is an improper part of their buſineſs, and why they ought not to ſupply men with capitals to trade upon, but only with that part, which may be called running caſh and occaſional demands.

The trade of this country has increaſed ſo much within theſe twenty years, that moſt men of but tolerable capacity and induſtry have ſeldom failed of ſucceſs in their undertakings. But among ſo great a number of competitors, there will be projectors and ſpeculators of every ſort, and of every ſize of underſtanding. *Theſe* are the dangerous rocks in trade, more dangerous than the rocks of the ſea, upon which they themſelves ſo often not only ſplit, but frequently draw down deſtruction on the heads of the incautious and credulous,

* Vol. 1. p. 449.

dulous, who are incompetent to judge of their chimerical pretenſions.

Sober tradeſmen, and grave merchants, have long been aſtoniſhed to ſee men without property obtain credit for thouſands, whom they would not have truſted with a ſhilling; and yet more aſtoniſhed to ſee ſo many ſucceed, even without any rational attention to the old prudential maxims of trade. Can there be a higher evidence of the flouriſhing ſtate of our trade, or of the riches of the country?

But this great facility of obtaining credit, naturally creates a wantonneſs of ſpeculation; and if bankers will lend their money and ſtrain their credit, to ſupply the irregular ſpeculations of men, who will not confine themſelves within their own buſineſs and knowledge, by iſſuing ſuch enormous quantities of paper, as, upon a ſlight run, it muſt be impoſſible for them nearly to pay; who can

be

be ſurpriſed at the bankruptcies which have lately enſued? Nothing can be more abſurd than for a man of property, integrity, and ſenſe, who generally finds it quite ſufficient for himſelf to conduct his own affairs with ſecurity, advantage, and reputation, to liſten to the ſchemes, or mix in the affairs, of men who may be very deficient in thoſe great points. Suppoſe the number to be eight or ten in *the creation* of a paper circulation of credit, would any rational man, with a ſolid fortune and ſound reputation, unneceſſarily make himſelf accountable for the prudence, care, and management of nine ſchemers or adventurers, of various purſuits, paſſions, and underſtandings, and who have little or nothing of their own to loſe? If avarice be his motive, and ruin the conſequence, he ſeems to receive only his juſt deſert.

The late bankruptcies were undoubtedly produced by ſuch an over-trading on paper credit; and not ſo much from a deficiency of

real

real property, as from an unregulated diſperſion of it. The government ſaw this, and acted with true patriotic benevolence and wiſdom, by relieving their diſtreſſes at a much lower intereſt than could have been afforded or obtained by paper circulation; which, indeed, by its accumulated intereſt, was a principal cauſe of the failures.

However, this bankrupt-alarm and diſtreſs in trade, abating individual misfortune, and unhappineſs, will certainly prove no eſſential injury to the public, but rather an advantage. The real wealth of the nation remains nearly the ſame, and this wholeſome check to extravagant ſpeculations, will fix its true proſperity on a more ſolid baſis.

As to our trade with other nations, it muſt always be regulated according to exiſting treaties, of which our merchants are not, or ought not to be, ignorant. Under thoſe treaties the merchants take their own courſe,

and ſettle their connections and correſpondencies, as they may judge moſt convenient for their own intereſts. *They* are to eſtimate the dangers of trade with every nation, and the proſpect of ſatisfactory profit; the government does not interfere, nor can be at all accountable for the iſſue of theſe things, unleſs on repreſentations of injuſtice, or infringement of treaties.

Whatever bankruptcies, therefore, may happen in any nation, to affect the intereſts of our merchants, or whatever failures may occur in the ſchemes of our merchants in other nations; they moſt certainly muſt be imputed either to want of attention, want of knowledge or ſkill, to too hazardous ſpeculations or to unavoidable miſfortunes. The government not interfering in ſuch things, certainly cannot be chargeable with any of the conſequences. The buſineſs of government is to maintain the treaties, and to defend the ſubject againſt all injuſtice and oppreſſion from all nations; but the mercantile

cantile conduct of men, both at home and abroad, is entirely their own affair.

It will be unneceſſary to obſerve, that by the great intelligence and liberal communications of Mr. Wilſon, happily his friends, the manufacturers, and the reſt of the trading world, cannot be ignorant of the bankrupt-ſtate of all the nations of Europe; they will doubtleſs, therefore, regulate the profits of their commerce according to the immenſity of the danger. But pray, Sir, do you not think it would be much more prudent to decline all dealings with ſuch a beggarly ſet of nations?

Mr. Wilſon's obſervations on the increaſe of the military eſtabliſhments of Europe, and the ſupport they have received from *the funding ſyſtem*, are as trite as poſſible, worth very little notice, and would be read only as heads of chapters, if it were not for the virulence and malignant aſperity, with which he endeavours to excite in his countrymen an averſion and

contempt

contempt for all the nations of Europe; and a ſeditious diſſatisfaction with the government of their own country.

* If what he has ſaid of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, had been ſaid of Peter the Great, in his own life-time; or of almoſt any other potentate in Europe, they would have demanded reparation of our court, by their ambaſſadors, for ſo outrageous an inſult. But that great princeſs, knowing the *licentiouſneſs*, as well as the *liberty of the Britiſh preſs*, will doubtleſs treat it with ſilent contempt.

Mr. Wilſon ſeems not to underſtand the great impropriety of abuſing our friends and allies, nor the impolicy of venting our ſplenetic humours on their characters.

" † *A philoſophical mind* will diſcover in every " page of hiſtory, and will lament while it " excuſes, the fatal ignorance of thoſe, by whom " nations

* p. 9. † p. 10.

" nations have been governed. General invec-
" tives against such characters are however un-
" just; the rulers of the world ought to be
" approached with mingled *respect and pity. Su-*
" *preme power*, to its proper exercise, requires
" *perfect wisdom*, and monarchs as well as
" ministers, are weak, fallible, and ignorant
" like ourselves, &c."

Such a philosophical mind, as views all things with a vitiated jaundiced eye; which broods over the evils of human life, forgetful of the good; and laments the fatal ignorance of those who have governed nations, while with a *supercilious pride*, he excuses them, and teaches us, with contemptuous irony, to approach the rulers of the world *with mingled respect and pity*; will never instruct mankind in any thing that can contribute to the necessary and rational subordination of political society; nor to their solid peace and happiness. With what tumidity are we told, that monarchs and ministers have weaknesses and failings like other men! As to

supreme

Supreme power and perfect wisdom, surely no man ever imagined their existence, but in the Creator of the universe. But like the mountain in labour, he heaves and rolls, and raises our expectation, and is delivered of a ridiculous mouse.

No part of the conduct of the reformers and revolutionists in this kingdom, *seems* to be so *innocent,* and *is,* at the same time, so *impudent,* as their reiterated demands of naming the plots and conspiracies, which occasioned so much fear and alarm before the declaration of war by the French against this country. Such plots and conspiracies both at home, and with the French, certainly existed, and were in train: And he must be but a shallow observer, who does not now meet every day, with unfeeling palliators, and inveterate advocates for the detestable conduct of the French.

Plots and conspiracies can only be proved, legally, in this country, by waiting 'till they

ripen into action, that is, in this instance, by waiting 'till they would have been dangerous to the existence of our happy constitution. The government of this country was well informed of the danger, and at length, found no possible remedy against the practical introduction of the infernal Jacobinical tenets among ourselves, but force and war. Tenets more dangerous to our internal security and happiness, and to our constitutional existence, than the most severe civil, or foreign, wars that ever disturbed the peace of the British nation.

One of the most extraordinary circumstances, but not inexplicable, is the very strong disposition of *some dissenters* in this kingdom in favour of the French. Men, who profess *much more purity* in their moral and religious sentiments than other men; men, who assign the *nicety of their consciences*, as the cause of their dissent; but who can nevertheless feel a tenacious partiality for the French amidst all their horrid politics; can rejoice in their success, and grieve

at

at their defeats; can coalesce in sympathy and sentiment, with the most atrocious monsters, that ever disgraced and disfigured humanity.

But these things, strange as they appear, are explicable under the heads of fanaticism in religion, and politics; for fanaticism in either, is so mad a thing, that it destroys our natural feelings, and renders men callous to benevolence, justice, and humanity.

It has been wittily said by the * founder of a small sect, that the church of Christ never can be numerous, because his religion is not of this world; and when any church becomes fashionable, and begins to flourish and prevail, it becomes a worldly affair, and is no longer christian, but political.

We shall not here enter into a discussion of this observation; but, most undoubtedly, the discontents of the dissenters concerning the *non-repeal*

* Sandiman.

repeal of the corporation and teſt acts, *ariſe merely from political motives and ambitious views.*

Their religious ſentiments have received every indulgence and protection, that can rationally be given under the wiſe conſtitution of this country. Under this conſtitution they have long enjoyed every imaginable liberty that man can enjoy, excluded only from a participation in the government of the ſtate; (from which thouſands of the church eſtabliſhed are alſo excluded by their ſituations and circumſtances) and in manufactures and commerce have, perhaps, ſo far exceeded their own expectations in acquiſitions of wealth, as to find a luxuriant leiſure to forget their religion, and to turn their minds to politics, and worldly grandeur.

It muſt live in the memory of thoſe who attended to their conduct, on the firſt motion for the repeal of the corporation and teſt acts; that they affected delicacy of principle, and

were ſtrongly with Mr. Pitt, whoſe moral character and integrity, they pretended to admire, and held the leaders of the Foxite party in a ſort of abhorrence, on account of their impiety and profligacy. But, when they found Mr. Pitt could not, or would not, go the lengths they deſired; and Mr. Fox talked with his uſual latitude and indifference, about ſpeculative faith and opinions, they found much more hope in his ſcepticiſm, than in the conſtitutional firmneſs of the miniſter. Mr. Fox was then found to be the true friend of liberty, very honeſt, and religious enough, for their purpoſes; and his moſt eloquent and diſtinguiſhed coadjutors and adherents, ſo eminent for their moral and religious virtues, have received *the fraternal kiſs*, from many a pious, and devoutly political diſſenter.

How eaſy is the progreſs, *from ſuch an union to a coalition* with French anarchy and atheiſm? eſpecially, when their religion is ſo far forgotten, that the moſt horrible and deteſtable

crimes,

crimes, ſeem not to ſhake their ſteady perſeverance and unholy ambition. Conſcience, ſurely, can have but little to do, in ſuch proceedings; and nothing but the fear of ridicule and contempt, ariſing from their long phariſaical pretenſions, could keep ſuch men from an immediate acquieſcence in the corporation and teſt acts. But ſuperſtition unveiled, and atheiſm, are much more nearly allied than is commonly imagined. Infidelity and atheiſm had long been prevalent in holy Rome, and all over Italy, before the Lutheran reformation was heard of, or imagined.

Lord Thurlow ſaid, perhaps wiſely, when the diſſenters applied to him, that he was for the *religion eſtabliſhed*; and, that if their religion were *eſtabliſhed*, he would be for that; knowing, both in a moral and political ſenſe, that *ſome eſtabliſhment* in this country, is neceſſary to reſtrain the violences of religious hatred and animoſity, *within the due bounds of law*; to terminate the political pretenſions of the vari-

ous ſects to toleration; and to exclude from politics and found government, the heterogeneous mixture of incomprehenſible and indeterminable ſpeculations, with which *ſincere ſectaries* torment themſelves; and, if they had power, would torment others, and endanger the peace of the ſtate, and the ſtability of the conſtitution.

It is impoſſible, that a man ſincerely and violently attached to ſuch *religious opinions*, or rather *ſpeculations*, as are totally above the reach of the human underſtanding; and that can perſuade himſelf of his real knowledge of incomprehenſible things, with a burning zeal, to maintain and propagate his poſitive and preſumptuous faith; it is impoſſible for *ſuch a man* to entertain the mild principles of toleration. The ſincerity of ignorance, is the moſt incorrigible and intolerant of all things.

Nothing but a well grounded, and real knowledge, can ever make a man tolerant in

religion,

religion, or rationally diffident of his own ſtrength in any other points. Nothing but a thorough diſcuſſion of himſelf, and a cloſe examination of the real extent of his faculties and knowledge, can humiliate his mind to that moderation, which reſults from a conviction of its own imbecility, *in ſuch high and important queſtions.*

The conceitedneſs of ſectarian diſputations and *diſſent*, about trivial, or incomprehenſible diſtinctions, can never acquire *the liberality of a generous toleration*; though, *for political and ambitious purpoſes*, they have, of late, abſurdly affected it, even in government, with an unlimited extravagance. What a diſcordant and motley crew, would our two houſes of parliament, our courts of juſtice, our corporations, our civil officers of every denomination, and our officers of the navy and army, preſent to our view, compoſed of a hundred different and contentious ſects, of political Chriſtians; of

Jews;

Jews, of Mahometans, of falſe philoſophers, and of diſtracted atheiſts!

It requires no reaſoning to ſhew the anarchical tendency and conſequences of ſuch a collection of combuſtible and irreconcilable principles; nor to prove the wiſdom of a religious eſtabliſhment, which is *in perfect conſent with the political conſtitution of any nation*; but of *this nation particularly*: For certainly the principal ſtrength and energy of the executive power of the Britiſh conſtitution, muſt be attributed to its legal, political and religious unity.

As to men's *pretending to act*, in their worldly or political affairs, quite independently and abſtractedly of their religious principles, (if they be at all in earneſt, or zealous about them) it is a deceitful and vain artifice, and contrary to daily experience; and which no wiſe ſtateſman, of the moſt benevolent and tolerating principles, *ought ever to forget*; for whenever indif-

ference,

ference, or negligence wears away, and seriousness takes her turn; *the same religious principles, with the same zeal, will produce the same, or similar consequences for ever.*

Much has been said, by Mr. Jasper Wilson, about the impolicy of the war, and the possibility, nay of the ease, of avoiding it, if Mr. Pitt had not been either *so haughty*, or *so weak*. The insolence and folly of such language must be obvious to every reader; and every man, tolerably conversant in human nature, must perceive, that *the principles and conduct* of the French (if the dereliction of every principle of justice may be so called) were most just and necessary causes of war, if no other provocations had forced it upon us. *Such principles* as, by inverting the order of nature, *pretend* to elevate ignorance and folly to supreme authority in nations; and as *affirm* their capability of such supremacy, contrary to the clearest evidence of our daily experience and knowledge, and to the histories of all ages; is certainly one of the

most

absurd, most dangerous, and wicked errors, that ever was attempted to be imposed on mankind by the force of arms; and by a general war against all those nations which are so unfortunate as to be at all within the reach of its vortex.

That *true liberty*, among the French, was not understood, or could not be justly obtained, is most evident from the extreme tyranny that nation now labours under, which has been, and is productive of more oppression, injustice and cruelty than ever was exhibited before on the face of the earth. Any *established* absolute monarchy, or even despotism, must be esteemed a paradise in comparison.

It may suit very well with the supercilious knowledge of such "philosophers in their closets" as Mr. Wilson, to talk of a peace, and of ministers missing opportunities of making peace; who cannot understand the impossibility of peace with men whose principles and actions

are

are in conſtant violation and oppoſition to the natural means of peace among mankind. What nation can be at peace with men, who labour inceſſantly to excite ſedition and rebellion in all the nations upon earth? In ſhort, no man can ſeriouſly palliate or defend their conduct, without diſhonourable imputations on his own principles; nor can any party in Great-Britain eſpouſe their moral or political tenets, without affording *juſt cauſe* of ſuſpecting them, not only as enemies of their country, but as enemies of human nature.

*Mr. Wilſon plumes himſelf, vainly enough, upon *an aſſertion*, of which he challenges "the "moſt rigid examination." It is not worth the pains of an examination, but for the ſake of thoſe who may be impoſed on by the many *falſe and confident aſſertions* which make up ſo great a part of this virulent pamphlet.

* p. 25.

His words are these:

" * It has been imagined by many that the
" present war ought to be light in com-
" parison of the last, because, then we fought
" alone, and now all the world is in alliance
" with us. Mr. Dundas, in the House of
" Commons, boasted of this; and declared
" the intention of ministry was to bring, if
" possible, every nation of Europe upon
" France. It is, I presume, in consequence of
" this policy, before it was avowed, that Spain
" and Prussia are now in arms, and that
" Portugal, Turkey, and the northern powers
" are openly solicited to join the general con-
" federacy. *Weak and miserable policy!* Better
" far had it been for Britain to have fought
" France singly, *if she had been twice as great*,
" while the rest of Europe looked on, than
" to stir up and mingle in this crusade of
" folly and ruin. I speak not in the langu-
" age of a *moralist*, but of a *politician*, *and of*
" *this assertion I challenge the most rigid examin-*
" *ation.*"

Will

* p. 25.

Will any rational man deny, that a general confederacy of moſt of the nations of Europe againſt France, is likely to prove the moſt *expeditious and efficacious* method of reducing her pernicious extravagancies within due bounds? And will any man deny, that with reſpect to each nation individually, its expences muſt be leſs, in proportion to the number of the confederated parties, according to their various forces raiſed and paid for? And is not ſuch a ſtrong confederacy the moſt probable means of producing *as ſpeedy a peace as poſſible?*

If Mr. Dundas did boaſt of this policy in the Houſe of Commons, it was not without the cleareſt reaſon, notwithſtanding Mr. Wilſon's challenge. But as to open, or ſecret, ſolicitations by England to prevail on other nations to enter into the confederation, they ſeem not to have been very neceſſary; for the French themſelves forced many, if not all, into the war, and England among the reſt,

very reluctantly moſt certainly. But the French Jacobin principles, and conſequent conduct, are naturally at war with all mankind. They compel the world to be their enemies, and the more powerful the confederation againſt them, the ſooner we ſhall find them reduced within due bounds.

Weak and miſerable policy! cries Mr. Wilſon. And why? Becauſe he chuſes *to aſſert roundly*, that it would have been far better for Britain to have fought France ſingly, *if her power had been twice as great as it is*, while the reſt of Europe looked on. If the French power were *twice as great as it is*, Mr. Wilſon would find but few men, *not lunatic*, to agree with him in his *boaſted and idle aſſertion*. To ſuppoſe the reſt of Europe looking on too, may not be an unpleaſant conceit to himſelf, but it would not be a very probable thing at this, or any other time.

It

It ſeems not to be unneceſſary to inform "our philoſopher in his cloſet," that ſuch picked ſituations, as he may divert himſelf with deſcribing, are not found in the ordinary courſe of human affairs; and that when nations go to war, they are obliged to take things and circumſtances, as they find them.

He ſays, *if* all Europe were at peace, and lookers-on, while we were at war, ſingly, with the French, they would be able to purchaſe our manufactures; but, "the nations of Eu-"rope are in arms (from the White Sea to "the pillars of Hercules!) and who is there "now to buy our manufactures?" Why, ſublime Sir, the ſame nations that uſed to to buy them before the war, except the French, who, whether we were at war with them or not, would have reduced themſelves to beggary, and muſt have been equally unprofitable to us for many years to come. But if it had been poſſible for Britain to have been at peace, and *a looker-on* in the preſent war, ſtill

all

all the other nations muſt neceſſarily have been at war with the French, in their own defence; and, as buyers of manufactures and merchandize, exactly in the ſame circumſtances, in which they now are; except that by a longer continuation of war, without our aid, they might have been more impoveriſhed. But the ſpeculation is idle; the war was inevitable; and *Jacobin principles* make it a defenſive war in all the confederated nations.

* As to the reaſoning, that follows our author's *challenging aſſertion*, it is ſo vague and unfounded, and ſo unlike the clearneſs and correctneſs of Doctor Adam Smith, whom he imitates, and wiſhes to be thought well acquainted with, that there is nothing in it worth the leaſt notice, but his conſtant diſpoſition to create groundleſs fears and ſeditious diſcontents in his own country. Yet he finds a trade for us, in this war, *if we had been at peace ourſelves*, in the ſale of clothing, arms, ammunition, proviſions, and warlike

* p. 26, 27.

warlike ſtores. And, as far as it can extend, what is there to hinder us from our ſhare of ſuch a trade, now we are at war? The French cannot rival us in it; their power at ſea is nearly annihilated.

Our author ſeems to have entertained himſelf, if not his readers, with an expreſſion of Mr. Windham's in the Houſe of Commons: "Periſh our commerce, if it muſt periſh, "but let our conſtitution live." This ſerves him for an opportunity to utter the moſt contemptuous epithets of Mr. Windham. "Fooliſh, and fooliſh words," are repeatedly uſed; and the ſchool of Mr. Burke at St. Omer's is mentioned as a reproach to the Norwich member, who, it is moſt probable, knows nothing of ſuch a ſchool but by report. Mr. Burke's "grand and obſcure ideas, "that aſſociate with the loſty manners of "chivalry, and the gothic gloom of a darker "age," are ſneeringly deſcribed; with ideas no leſs obſcure, and words much more indeterminate

determinate. But, ſurely, every reader will naturally demand, what has Mr. Pitt to do with the fooliſh words of the *one*, or with the grand and obſcure ideas of the *other?* In ſhort, it ought always to be underſtood of every man, that it is quite ſufficient for him to account for his own actions and expreſſions; and though he may entertain a juſt affection for his friends, it would be very unreaſonable to reproach him with their accidental errors or imperfections. In a letter addreſſed to Mr. Pitt, he ought not, by implication, to be blamed for the conduct or language of his friends, unleſs he ſupport and defend ſuch conduct and language.

There can be no doubt that Mr. Windham's meaning is perverted; for he is well known not to be ſo *fooliſh*, as Mr. Wilſon chuſes to repreſent him. It may not be improper, therefore, to endeavour, in a few words, to ſhew how far commerce and our conſtitution are connected; and whether their

union

union be ſuch, as that the one cannot be conceived to exiſt without the other.

As to the exiſtence of *any government*, without ſome degree of commerce, without ſome wants from neighbouring or other nations, it is not very eaſily to be imagined; indeed, it is an uſeleſs ſpeculation.

The conſtitutions and various governments of nations, *whatever the form*, are, when eſtabliſhed, generally the reſult of numerous ſtruggles and contentions; which, if the wiſdom of man can ſometimes foreſee, he can ſeldom rationally controul. Nothing can be eſtabliſhed, not even the worſt conſtitutions, without much preceding miſery; and the progreſſion upwards to the beſt, ſuch as the Britiſh conſtitution undoubtedly is, could never have been accompliſhed but through ſuch ſcenes of civil wretchedneſs, as all wiſe men muſt deprecate a repetition of, without the moſt cruel neceſſity.

Commerce will generally flourish in proportion to the security of property, the justice of the laws, and the degree of liberty in the constitution of any country; or in the degree of encouragement necessary to supply the place of that liberty.

That our commerce is greater than that of any other nation in the world, is the most decisive proof of the extraordinary liberty we enjoy. But our commerce is only *a consequence* of the freedom of our constitution, it is not *a part* of our constitution. The great increase of all our useful and ornamental manufactures; our roads, canals, and agricultural knowledge; the prodigious increase of our towns and cities; the great encouragement given to all the fine arts, and to all sorts of literary pursuits; and the immense extent of our external trade and possessions, *are all consequences and evidences* of the excellent *principles* of the British constitution; but *consequences* can never be deemed *principles*.

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The *consequences* may vary; they may increase or diminish very considerably, according to external or internal circumstances and accidents; but the *fundamental principles of the constitution will remain the same.*

But Mr, Wilson's meaning, *perhaps*, may be comprehensible (*perhaps*, for clearness is not one of his talents) if we suppose him to mean that our *national debt* is very great; that *productive taxes* are necessary to pay *the interest* of that debt; and that any *considerable diminution of commerce* would lessen the productive taxes, and thereby endanger the security of the *public creditors*, as far as it might operate, is *a simple truism*, and known to every body; and for that reason, no rational man can doubt, that every proper and possible care will be taken to prevent any injustice or misfortune from any such circumstance. The disinterested and penetrating mind of *the person*, to whom he addresses his letter, does not

require the admonitions of an enemy, to remind him of ſo plain a truth.

But our author ſeems *to take it for granted*, that a failure of public credit would produce a revolution in the conſtitution; and that it is a neceſſary conſequence; and ſo, in his mind, *perhaps*, commerce and the conſtitution became jumbled together. The deſtruction of conſtitutions, by the failure of public credit, is one of the moſt favourite and poſitive opinions of the Democratical revolutioniſts.

But paſt experience, one would have thought, might have taught them better. There have been many breaches made in public credit without producing any ſuch effect, in ſeveral nations. That it was the only cauſe of the French revolution, is certainly falſe. The French were long ripe, and previouſly diſpoſed by their licentious wits and unprincipled philoſophers, to enter upon extravagant revolutions in religion and politics. The failure

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of public credit was not *the cauſe*, but only afforded the *beſt opportunity* of exhibiting their long-concealed diſcontents.

But the errors of Mr. Wilſon are not the worſt part of his performance; nor his intricate and complicated manner of expreſſing the confuſion of his ideas. In the moſt turgid and implicated language, he revolts our minds with pretenſions of patriotiſm; and with ſome aukward confeſſions of Mr. Pitt's extraordinary talents and character; but conſtantly interſperſes, with dictatorial inſolence, the moſt impudent reflections upon the man he pretends to reſpect and admire; and the moſt ſeditious and malevolent expreſſions againſt the peace and proſperity of the country, for which he hypocritically affects to feel a benevolent concern. This good ſort of malevolence, this frank inſincerity, and this aſperity of love and patriotiſm, ſeem extremely well calculated to work on the crazy minds of our irrational malcontents; but they merit

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the deteſtation of every true friend of his country. Let us ſelect a few examples and conclude.

*Cabinets (he tells us) are governed by *ignorance and caprice*, hence the difficulty of predicting how they may act. But the conduct of trade is more eaſy to eſtimate, becauſe "it is conſtantly governed by a ſenſe "of intereſt, the *moſt uniform motive* of human "conduct." It is not the *moſt honourable motive* however. "The freaks of the *miſ-* "*chievous monkey* are indeed wild and capri- "cious, but the actions of the *induſtrious* "*beaver* are uniform and exact." This compariſon of the actions of cabinets to the freaks of a miſchievous monkey, he owns "is not "very reſpectful," but he is ſo delighted with it himſelf, that he beſtows a note on us to elucidate it farther.

In

* p. 19, 20.

* In his indignation against Mr. Windham, for "foolish words," "perish our commerce," he introduces a period finely turned for sedition, thus:—"What shall maintain the Crown "*against a band of factious nobles, cajoling the* "*people with the sound of liberty, to cover their* "*selfish ambition*; or what shall *defend here-* "*ditary honours (honours of a band of factious* "*nobles?)* and property of every kind *against* "*the great mass of the nation, now become poor,* "*and therefore* DESPERATE; RAVENOUS, *per-* "*haps, from their wants, and* TERRIBLE *from* "*the remainder of* SPIRIT AND PRIDE, *which* "*has descended from better times.*" It needs no comment: this "mischievous monkey" of an author very ill deserves to live *in these times*, under the protection of the British constitution and government.

"† At present, *never was a nation more sub-* "*missive, or more loyal*; but *a wise minister will* "*not wantonly try our patience, or goad us too* "*much.*"

* p. 31. † p. 32.

tt much." By this threat, it ſhould ſeem, Mr. Wilſon and his comrades, can hardly repreſs their revolutionary fire. What is there to *goad* them in this happy country, except their own ungovernable and malignant minds? *What intereſt* can *a wiſe miniſter*, ever have, either *ſolidly favourable* to his private emolument, or to his ſubſtantial glory; contrary to the *real intereſt* of his country? But our author, and his admirers, ſeem not to underſtand theſe things: * "*A* "*ſenſe of intereſt the moſt uniform motive of human* "*conduct*" ſo prettily illuſtrated by the *manufacturing beaver*, and ſo excluſive of the more worthy, and more elevated principles of virtue, honour, and laudable ambition; appears to be *the only motive* of human conduct, admiſſible, or comprehenſible by them.

" † *Abject as the temper of the nation appears,* " it will not, I apprehend, ſubmit to utter " ruin; and I pronounce *cooly*, what I have " conſidered *deeply*, that nothing but utter " ruin

* p. 20. † p. 54.

" ruin can be the consequence of our persist-
" ing in this co-partnership with the folly and
" bankruptcy of the continental powers. It
" is not enough that we pay with English gui-
" neas, *extracted from the labour of our oppressed*
" *peasantry*, the people of Hesse and Hanover,
" to fight German battles; we must support
" the armies of Austria also, *and from the*
" *wreck of our ruined manufactures, supply them*
" *with food, clothing, and arms.*"

Here is *a cool* and *a deep* attempt, and the more unpardonable upon that account, to sow the seeds of discontent and sedition among our peasantry and manufacturers.

" * *The mischief* that is meditated, *(the re-*
" *duction of the French from the most odious*
" *anarchy to negociable order)* is of a magnitude
" that seems more than mortal, but *happily*
" the execution of it requires more than mortal
" force."

* P. 55.

For the encouragement of our armies he gives them this complimentary warning.

" *The ignorant and innocent slaves,* that are the " instruments on this occasion are men---they " must be clothed and fed---they have men to " contend with, *and are liable to the death they* " *are sent to inflict---they may perish by the sword,* " *by fatigue, by famine and by disease.*"

To be sure, Mr. Wilson, all flesh must perish one way or other; and you are *so good* as to inform those who employ or command the armies of the world, " that they are men also, " weak, ignorant, and mortal, like the rest."

Pray Sir, do you not think *mutiny and sedition in our armies* might have been more probable, if you could have painted *the dangers and evils of a soldier's life, a little more highly coloured; and the weakness and ignorance of leaders and cabinets, if possible, a little more impudently affirmed?*

You

You might, perhaps, have had the pleasure of witnessing *a general revolt*, and weak and ignorant cabinets guillotined, and yourself elevated, either at the head of an irrational and licentious mob, or on a gibbet: A situation, perhaps, more consonant to the aerial fantasies, (to say no worse of them) of Mr. Jasper Wilson, than any other.

* He pays his compliments to Mr. Pitt, "without *hostility*" thus: "Such an opportu-"nity *(the prevention of the war)* of exerting "great power on the most sublime occasion "and to the noblest purposes is not likely to "occur in a single age, and *is reserved by Pro-"vidence for its choicest favourites.* Such an "opportunity was presented to you, and you "*weakly and blindly* cast it away."

The arrogance of his presumption with respect to the designs of Providence, and *the folly of favoritism attributed to infinite wisdom*, needs no comment

* P. 37.

comment, any more than the *weakneſs and blindneſs* among men, of ſuch a man as Mr. Pitt. And as to the practicability of preventing the war, we may very ſafely preſume, that Mr. Wilſon has never been conſulted on that topic, by the parties at war; and that they have not laid before him the various ſteps taken, and the neceſſary train of facts, which any *modeſt man* would naturally require, before he would preſume to form any *deciſive opinion* at all. *Ignorant, however, as he muſt be of this buſineſs*, he never ſhews any ſigns of diffidence or modeſty.

" *Mr. Hume has remarked the univerſal " and extreme reluctance, with which men " abandon power once poſſeſſed; and *you, Mr. " Pitt*, can probably ſpeak to this truth, from " your own feelings." There is no great brilliancy in Mr. Hume's obſervation, and certainly much leſs in Mr. Wilſon's impertinent application. Nothing would be ſo degrading to *a truly great man*, who on account of his virtues

* P. 53.

tues and great talents, is placed, with the approbation of his country, at the head of its affairs, as not *to feel the honour, and retain the power*, as long as he could exercise it advantageously for the interest and glory of his nation; and as long as there would be *just and well founded reason to fear*, if he did not retain the power, *it would fall into hands dangerous to the security and prosperity of his country*.----But to proceed.

" * *The opportunity of concluding a general* " *peace, presented itself* at the time of the con- " gress at Antwerp." We need only say, that our presumptuous author cannot be, at all, a competent judge of that, or of any other opportunity. Nevertheless he adds, with his usual effrontery and ill-manners, " This policy was " so clear, that *a mere child* might have dis- " cerned it.

† He concludes his compliments to Mr. Pitt thus. " More than one false step you " have

* p. 56. † p. 68.

" have already made--the precipice is directly " in your path that leads to inevitable destruc- " tion. *I know* the temptations and difficulties " of your situation. *We* will forgive the past, " but if you advance how shall you be for- " given?" If any excuse can be admitted for *the matchless assurance* of this writer, it can be nothing short of *madness*. And indeed, he begins his next paragraph with a sort of confession of insanity.

" In considering the present times, *I am some-* " *times affected with deep melancholy.*" He sees " through thick clouds and *darkness.*" And he, *madly*, charges *the councils of Heaven* with employing " *wicked instruments* for the highest " *purposes.*"

" The authors of the reformation were many " of them *ignorant, fierce and even bloody*; but " the work itself, was of the most important, " and most *universal benefit* to the human " race."

Ignorance,

Ignorance, fierceness, and blood do not shock him, when he considers *the universal benefit.* Nor does impiety stare him in the face, when he attributes *such instruments* to the councils of *Heaven.*

To do evil, that good may come of, it used to be *the detested principle of Jesuitism:* It may now be called *Jacobinism,* with the addition that it has hitherto produced nothing but *evil*; nor is it possible for *good* ever to arise out of it, as *a natural consequence* of Jacobinical principles.

But it is now time to conclude, and to leave Jasper Wilson, Esq. in his ill-boding prophetic phrenzy, regardless of his treacherous post-script; which, like the rest, labours to foment discontent and sedition among the people; insult and contempt towards the minister, mixed with a hypocritical profession of friendship for *the family on the throne,* and for the British Constitution.

F I N I S.